THE DYING MANS Last Sermon.

BRITISH MUSEUM

OR,

The Fathers laſt Bleſſing.

Left, and bequeathed as a Legacy unto his Children, immediately before his Death.

Being comfortable Meditations and Preparations for the day of death; which for the worth of them are more worthy to be written in letters of Gold, then with Ink and Paper.

The twelfth Edition with Additions, By ANDREW JONES, a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt.

Job 14. 1, 2. *Man that is born of a woman, is of few dayes and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth alſo as a ſhadow, and continueth not.*

London, Printed for *Elizabeth Andrews*, at the White Lion near *Pye-Corner*. 1665.

: dd. Chas. Fletcher Esq.

Not in the Bodleian catalogue 1843.

An anonymous writer in 1673 well describes the multitude of small religious tracts that appeared about this period:

"By scatter'd Penny-books some Scribblers try
How souls will thrive on mince'd divinity,
Some hail-shot pamphlets pilfer'd from the store
Of those brave souls that duel'd Rome before
Squirt forth against the Pope ——

News from the Press A°. 1673
pp. 5, 6.

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THE FATHERS last Bleſſing,

Left and bequeathed as a Legacy unto his Children a little before his Death.

The life of a Chriſtian is, or rather ſhould be, a continued daily meditation on, or a preparation for the day of his death. The firſt man living was called Adam Gen. 2. which in the original ſignifies a clod of red earth: and he was arrayed and cloathed by God with the skins of dead beaſts, and adjudged

judged to the Earth to dig and delve in it. God would have his very Name, his Apparel, his Employments, to be continual remembrancers of his original, and premonitours of his mortality. O that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would remember their latter end! For whatsoever a mans Wisdom, Birth, Beauty, Strength, or State be, his foundation is in the Dust: Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return, Gen. 3. 19. There seems to be a vaste difference between a Cedar and a Shrub, a Vine and a Bramble, so long as they both grow together, but cut them down and burn them, and their ashes will be one and the same. In this mortal life, some men sit upon the Throne, others are grinding at the Mill; some go clothed in purple, and fare deliciously every day as Dives did; and others like Lazarus, lie at rich mens gates, and have not so much as the crumbs of their table: but in the Grave there is no difference, there the poor and the rich are all one; the Worms feed as well on rich Dives, as on poor Lazarus: Kings and Emperours must submit to Death, and lay down their Crowns and Scepters at the Grave.

The

The Daughters of Jerusalem, as the Prophet Isaiah saith in the third Chapter and sixteenth Verse, which walk with stretched forth necks; and wanton inticing eyes, mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet, must at last drop into the grave. And they that glory in the nobleness of their Birth and Blood, must make their Beds in the Dust, and acknowledge Corruption for their Father, and the Worms for their Mother. Why then should sinful Dust and Ashes be proud? For we brought nothing with us into this world, and it is most certain we shall carry nothing with us out of this world, as the Apostle saith, 1 Tim. 6. 7. And holy Job saith, Job 1. 21. Naked came we out of our mothers womb, and naked shall we return, &c. And the Apostle saith, Hebrews 9. 27. It is appointed for all men once to dye. There is nothing more certain then Death, and yet nothing more uncertain: most certain it is we must all dye, but when, where, or how we must dye, that is altogether uncertain.

We read in the Scripture that all the Fathers dyed. Gen. 5. Adam the first man dyed; and Methuselah the eldest man he

dyed also. Abraham the friend of God, and father of all the faithful, he dyed, as you may read, Gen 25. 8 And Abraham gave up the ghost, and dyed in a good old age, an old man and full of years. David a man after Gods own heart, who triumphed over all the host of the Philistims, and slew Goliah, 1 Sam. 17. 49 yet was overcome by death, as you may read, 1 Kings 2. 10. And Solomon the wisest of men was constrained to submit unto death, as you may see, 1 Kings. 11. 43. And Moses the servant of the Lord, he dyed, Deut. 34. 5. And what man is he that liveth and shall not see death? For as wise men dye, (saith the Psalmist, Psalm 49. 10.) so likewise the fool, and the brutish person. We all, like the Disciples, run fast, who shall come first to the Sepulchre. We are no sooner born but we begin to dye. Man that is born of a Woman is of few days, He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down, Job 14. 1,2. In the morning they grow up and flourish, in the evening they are cut down and withered, saith Moses, Psalm 90. ver. 9. And holy Job saith, There is an appointed time for man upon earth, and God hath set bounds, beyond which he cannot pass, Job 7. 1. At the end of his appointed time

he

he muſt dye; yet the time when is very uncertain, as alſo the manner how: For one dyeth in his full ſtrength, and another in the bitterneſs of his ſoul. God will have us ignorant of the day of our death, that we might be ready every day. We are but Tenants at will, and know not how ſoon our great Lord and Landlord may eject us. Death ſurprized Abel in the field, Gen. 4. 8. Ely ſiting at the dore, 1 Sam. 4. 18. and Jobs Children a feaſting, Job 1. 18. Herod ſitting on his throne, Acts 12. 33. And as death it ſelf is uncertain, ſo is the manner alſo uncertain; there is a naturall death, and there is a violent death; a naturall death is when a man, as a lamp goeth out, becauſe there is no more oyl left to feed it; and a violent death is when the ſoul is as it were thruſt out of the body by ſome untimely accident. There is a timely death, when a man comes to his growth, in a full age, as a ſhock of corn cometh in his ſeaſon, which every godly man doth, though he dye never ſo ſoon, or never ſo young. And there is alſo an untimely death, (that is) when a man is cropt or cut off as an ear of Corn before it be harveſt. And there is a lingering death, when the

ſoul

soul is besieged with sickness, and so starved out of his habitation. And there is a sudden death, which strikes without giving warning, from which the Lord deliver us. And there is also a quiet death, a departing in peace, when the soul doth as it were steal out of the body.

Josiah he dyes by the wound of an arrow, 2 Chron. 35. 23. Abimelech by the fall of a stone, Judg. 9 53. Wicked proud Jezabel is eaten up of dogs, 2 Kings 9 36. There are thousands of casualties and diseases, and no man living knoweth what shall be his end: For unto God the Lord belong the issues of death, Psal. 68. 20. There is but one way into the world, but there are a thousand ways out of the world. And we may all say of death as David of Abimaaz, he is a good man and bringeth good tydings.

For first, the death of the body frees us from the body of death, the Remainders of corruption.

Secondly, the death of the body frees us from the misery and incumbrances of this life. So many are the miseries and afflictions of this life, that were it not for the hope of heaven, it would be worse then hell it self; crosses and afflictions come as fast upon

upon us as Jobs Messengers. The life of man is like a Winters day, short and very cloudy: Few and evil are the dayes of this life, Gen. 47. 9 Man that is born of a Woman is but of few dayes, but full of troubles, Job 14. 1, 2. Lastly, death translates us from a prison to a palace, from a Scaffold to a Paradise, from a vale of miseries, to a Kingdom of Glory; where God shall wipe away all teares from our eyes, Rev. 21. 4. Where there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; where we shall be perfectly free from all sin: therefore may we say with Solomon, Better is the dead then the living. And with St. Paul, To me to live is Christ, and to dye is gain, Phil. 1. 21.

Every man with Balaam desires to dye the death of the righteous, Numb. 23. 10. and in this they desire well: For to dye well is a point of the highest concernment in the world; because either eternal life or eternal death depends upon it; for as the tree falls, so shall it lie. But to dye well is not attainable, unless we have first learnt the art of living well. A fair day may have a foul evening, but a good life cannot have a bad death; for as David saith, Psal. 37. 37.

Mark

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace; therefore it is good always to be in readineſs for death; and whenſoever the will of the Lord is, willingly and chearfully to ſubmit unto it: for it is written, Rev. 14. 13. Bleſſed are the dead that dye in the Lord, for they reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them. And, if we be dead in Chriſt, we ſhall alſo riſe with Chriſt, Rom. 6. 8. For when Chriſt who is our life ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with him in glory, Col. 3. 4.

And now my Son, as I have leaſure and opportunity enough, ſo have I cauſe more then enough to meditate and prepare for death. I bleſs God, neither my proſperity nor my adverſity hath made me a ſtranger to the thoughts of Mortality: for meditating on, and preparing for death, is never unſeaſonable, although the time and manner of death be always very uncertain. I bleſs God I am not ſo old as to be weary of life, nor ſo bad as to be either afraid to dye, or aſhamed to live: my afflictions make me even ſometimes deſire to dye; but when I conſider that it is the glory of a Chriſtian to dye daily, I deſire to conquer

death

death by faith, and hopes of a better life. Blessed be God, I can look upon the sting of death as unpoisonous, although it may be sharp, because I know my Redeemer Jesus Christ hath taken it away by his death. I can say, and that truly, I never found so much life of Religion, the feast of a good conscience, as I have done since I came to converse so nearly with the thoughts of death. I do wholly desire to depend upon God, and submit to his will, both in life and death. I shall not think my life too long or too tedious, if God by prolonging it shall be pleased to give me fresh opportunities to do good thereby; neither shall I think my death too soon, whensoever the will of the Lord is to call for me: it is my honour and my exceeding great comfort that I can go as willingly to my grave, as to a bed of down, or roses; the will of God hath confined and concluded my will, I shall have pleasure in dying; for death cannot deprive me of more then I am willing to lose when God sees it fit, whose mercy I am confident will abundantly reward my loss, with the joyes of heaven.

My Son, the God of heaven and earth be thy portion; these are my last words,

for

for now the time is come, that I must leave this world and go to a better: hitherto as a Father have I protected and directed you; but now my time being come, my dayes being but a span long, I must go hence, and shall be no more seen, Psalm 39. 13. See therefore that you serve the Lord with all singleness and uprightness of heart in godly sincerity, and he will be a Father unto you in my stead. Keep a good Conscience all the dayes of your life, do to others, as you would have others to do to you; For that is the Law and the Prophets, saith our blessed Saviour, Mat 7. 12. And then when the time shall come, (which although you be young now, you know not how near it may lodge at this present; for many are living now that must dye to morrow, who would weep if they knew they had to short a time to live) that when you shall lie upon your deathbed, death may not affrighten you, but may appear unto you (as blessed be God it doth now unto me) not in his ugly shapes and deformities, but shingles as a friend, thus shall you have comfort within you, that shall rejoyce you with all outwards comforts fail you: then every pain you feel

shall be but as a pleasure unto you, because it shall prevent the pains of hell: then the grave shall not appear loathsome unto you, but sweet, because it was the Lords bed. I bless God, I finde the truth of this upon my own soul; and O that the mercies of God to me might move you and all others to love him, and to serve him to your lives end. And I charge thee before God, before whom I am presently to appear, that you honour God above all things daily and principally: let him be thy fear, and let him be thy dread, let him be thy counsellour, the joy and delight of thy soul; and be sure thou set God always before thy face, so will he be a lanthorn to thy feet, and a guide to thy paths. Labour strongly to suppress vice, and exalt vertue, strive to be in love with goodness, remember that thou must give an account of each idle hour, and every idle word, as our Saviour saith, Matth. 12. 36. Let all thy actions then proceed from a good conscience, for thou shalt never thrive by such wayes and means as God hath accursed, for that is a miserable gain that is gotten by the loss of thy soul. For what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.

Mat-

Matthew 16. 26. Be alwayes the ſame in the ſight of God, for he ſeeth all mens actions be they never ſo ſecret: as thou appeareſt to be in the ſight of men, take heed thou give no aid nor aſſiſtance to any wicked words or works, neither countenance wicked men in the leaſt with thy company; for the faults of thoſe whom thou favoureſt will be imputed to thee. Be not a follower of thoſe that inrich themſelves by unjuſt gain, for it is better to be poor with honeſty, then rich by wickedneſs. Account that day loſt in which thou haſt not done or learnt ſome good. Be more careful to keep thy word then thy money: acquaint thy ſelf with ſuch as are good and vertuous: look upon every thing here below as very uncertain, ſo ſhalt thou not rejoyce overmuch in thy proſperity, nor be overlad or diſmayed in adverſity. And what counſel I give thee here for the preſent, be ſure thou treaſure it up in ſtore for the time to come.

My Son, ſaith Solomon, Prov. 1. &c. Hear the inſtruction of thy Father. Hear ye children the inſtructions of a Father, and attend to know underſtanding, then ſhalt thou underſtand the fear of the Lord, and finde the

knowledge of God. Then ſhalt thou underſtand righteouſneſs, judgement, and equity, yea, every good path. Walk in the wayes of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous; for the upright ſhall dwell in the Land, and the perfect ſhall remain in it. But the wicked ſhall be cut off from the earth, and tranſgreſſors ſhall be rooted out. Let not mercy and truth forſake thee, binde them about thy neck, write them upon the tables of thy heart, ſo ſhalt thou finde favour and good underſtanding in the ſight of God and man. Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own underſtanding. In all thy wayes acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths. Happy is the man that findes wiſdom, that getteth underſtanding, for the merchandiſe of it is better then ſilver, and the gain thereof then fine gold. She is more precious then rubies, her wayes are wayes of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her, and happy is every one that retains her. My Son keep ſound wiſdom and diſcretion, and let it not depart from thine eyes, ſo ſhall it be life to thy ſoul, and grace to thy neck. Then ſhalt thou walk in thy way ſafely and thy foot ſhall not ſtumble. When thou lieſt down thou

ſhalt not be afraid, for the Lord ſhall be thy confidence. Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it. Enter not into the path of the wicked, go not in the way of wicked men; avoid it, paſs not by it, turn from it, and paſs away. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left, remove thy foot from evil. Be not over haſty to get riches, but conſider it is the bleſſing of the Lord that maketh rich, and he addeth no ſorrow to it. Let not thine heart envy ſinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day. Be not among wine-bibbers, nor among riotous eaters of fleſh, for the drunkard and the glutton ſhall come to poverty; and drowſineſs ſhall cloathe a man with rags. Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup; for at the laſt it ſtingeth like a ſerpent. Deviſe not evil againſt thy neighbour, for he that deviſeth to do evil, ſhall be called a miſchievous perſon. Rejoyce not when thine enemy falls, and let not thine heart be glad when he ſtumbleth, leſt the Lord ſee it, and it diſpleaſe him. Give not thy ſtrength unto women, nor thy words to that which deſtroyeth Kings. It is not for Kings to drink wine, nor Princes ſtrong drink; leſt they drink and forget the Law. Open thy

mouth for the dumb, open thy mouth; judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. Say not thou what is the cause that the former dayes were better then these, for thou doest not wisely imagine concerning that, but consider the work of the Lord; for who can make that streight which he hath made crooked, Eccles. 7. 10, 13.

And further, my Son I would have thee to consider seriously of what I have said, and remember this as the last words of thy dying Father: Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccles. 12, 13, 14.

Thus having briefly admonished thee in the words of the Wise-man, I shall spend out my last breath in a word or two more, and I have done: it is some refreshment to my fainting spirits to consider how you have begun and spent some years in the experience of troubles, and exercise of patience; and indeed I had rather you should be good and afflicted, then great and second in the world, I hope God hath designed you to both, having so early put you

on the exercise of his Graces, Faith, Love, and Patience, which onely will dispose you, to these princely endowments and improvements that may gain you the love and favour of all those that fear the Lord. With God I would have you begin, and with God I would have you end: you have begun well, the Lord bless you, go on and prosper; Piety will make you prosperous, at least it will keep you from being miserable, Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of the life to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8. Nor is he much a loser that loseth all yet saveth his own soul. I trust you have already tasted of that bitter cup whereof I have so deeply drunk. Above all, I would have you, as I hope you are already, well grounded and setled in Religion, and the wayes of God, in which I charge you to persevere; for unless you be well grounded and settled in Religion, you shall never want temptations to destroy you. Therefore take heed of abetting any Faction whatsoever, for I have observed, that the Devil of Rebellion doth turn himself commonly into an Angel of Light and Reformation: when some mens consciences accuse them

with

with Sedition and Heresie, they like the old Serpent pretend new light, and stop its mouth with the name and noise of Religion; and when Piety pleads for Peace and Patience, then they cry out Zeal, Zeal. Be sure alwayes to keep up well-grounded Piety, and such Fundamental Truths as mend both hearts and lives of most men: and with an equal eye and impartial hand, distribute competent rewards to such as by well-doing shall deserve them, which will undoubtedly gain you both the hearts and favours of the best, yea, and the most too, who though they be not good themselves will be glad to see the works of vertue sweetned by temporal rewards.

And once more I do require you, and intreat you, as a Father, as a dying Father, that you never suffer your heart to receive the least dissatisfaction to the truth of Religion now established, which I have by experience found to be the best in the world, and nearest agreeing to the word of God. Happy times I hope will attend you. The Lord bless you, and establish your soul in right counsels, that as you grow in years, so you may grow also in wisdom and goodness,

neſs, in grace and favour both with God and man. The Lord bleſs you, and make his face to ſhine upon you. And now behold I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand, I bleſs God I can ſay as St. Paul did, 2 Tim. 3. 7, 8. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the Faith; henceforth therefore there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day; and not to me onely, but to all them alſo that love his appearing. And now I leave you, and go before you to a better Kingdom; an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. 1. 4. which the Lord hath prepared for me, and me for it, through the onely and alone merits of my onely and all-ſufficient Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; to whoſe bleſſed protection and mercy, I commend and leave you: and ſo farewell till we meet, if not on Earth, yet in Heaven.

7 JU62

FINIS.

Courteous Reader.

THere is lately publiſhed an excellent and profitable Sermon, called, The Chriſtians Bleſſed Choice. Likewiſe Chriſts firſt Sermon. alſo, Chriſts laſt Sermon: And the Chriſtians beſt Garment. Alſo Heavens Glory, and Hells Horror. And the School of Grace. Alſo, A warning-piece to the Sloathful, Idle, Careleſs, Drunken, and Secure Ones of theſe laſt and worſt of times. Very godly Books, and are but three pence price.

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